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NEW PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM IN HUNGARY

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Public health protection has made great progress in Hungary in the 8 years since the liberation. Budapest has a new hospital, the Tetenyiuti Korhaz (Tetenyi Street Hospital), and modern medical dispensaries have been built in Kispest, Varpalota, and Sztalinvaros. The Laszlo-korhaz (Laszlo Hospital) in Budapest has two up-to-date isolation buildings. The Tudobeteggyogyintezet (Institute of Tubercular Therapy) in Debrecen has a new department of lung surgery.

The provinces are well provided with medical facilities. Today, there are 8 new general jaras hospitals, 6 special jaras hospitals, and 12 jaras seats have new dispensaries. There is a well-organized network of jaras and district physicians, who make regular rounds and practice preventive as well as curative medicine.

Workers' health measures and medical service have been introduced in most large industrial plants and in the mining and building industries. Today industrial day nurseries can accommodate nearly 20,000 children. Prenatal and post-natal care has been developed, and improved pediatrics have resulted in a decrease of infant mortality to nearly one half the number of deaths reported in 1938.

Cancer and tuberculosis are being combated effectively. Every jaras has a tuberculosis sanatorium, and over 2.3 million persons were screened for this disease in 1952. As a result of improved care, there were 57 percent fewer deaths from tuberculosis last year than in 1938.

Six hundred cancer detection centers are in operation, and departments for the treatment of cancer and tumor have been set up in Miskolc, Szombathely, and Hodmezovasarhely hospitals.

Due to improved standards of living, Hungary's birth rate has increased 47 percent as compared with 1938, while the death rate has declined below that of England's.

The additional 60 million forints which the government has allotted to public health for the remainder of this year will be used to improve pediatric wards, child welfare institutions, and day nurseries and to train the personnel in charge of children at these institutions. Part of the allotment will be used for the care of mothers and pregnant women; accommodations will be made for 2,500 more day nurseries in industry and on the farms. Preventive medicine will be extended and the supply of drugs increased. The government has already decreed that insulin and testosterone are to be issued free of charge to those suffering from diabetes and bone cancer.

The public has the right to expect better and more efficient service from its medical institutions and physicians. Medical workers must realize that it is their duty to serve the people. This realization should be reflected in a change of attitude between doctor and patient. The doctor must be conscientious, attentive, understanding, and modest. The doctor's task will, in turn, be facilitated by the new emphasis on consumer goods in light industry and on the food industry. Public health workers must tighten their control over the production of foods and drugs, insisting on the maintenance of health and hygienic standards in industry as well as in public eating places and canteens.

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The government considers it important to improve the living conditions of agricultural workers; investments earmarked for this purpose should be handled more scrupulously. The work of the provincial physicians and health institutions should be raised to a higher plane.

Public health institutions must establish closer contact with factories and plants in order to determine what types of safety and health regulations, or installations, are required in each place, and see that they are enforced and installed.

The section of the Labor Code that regulates the types and hours of employment to which pregnant women may be assigned must be rigidly enforced through the active supervision of public health workers.

The public health organizations must play an active part in assuring that the 40,000 new dwellings which the government intends to build in 1954 are safe and hygienic in every respect.

The Ministry of Public Health has by no means done everything it could to promote the welfare of the workers. Another great defect is that the prerequisites to efficient and effective work have not been created for public health workers.

A great many public health institutions lack adequate dressing and wash-room facilities for their workers. Only a few hospitals have day nurseries. Public health workers whose employment takes them to unhealthful or dangerous areas lack protective equipment. Many of them are without suitable lodgings or means of transportation, particularly in the provinces.

These shortcomings must be corrected by the ministry in the future; if they are not, public health workers will be unable to serve the country well.

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